FDA takes hard look at CBD

June 3 2019

(HealthDay)—The U.S. Food and Drug Administration took a good look at the safety and effectiveness of cannabidiol (CBD) products on Friday, as it weighs how to best regulate the hemp-derived compound going

forward.

During a public hearing that stretched for hours, the agency heard testimony from parties on all sides of the issue. In opening the hearing, FDA Acting Commissioner Ned Sharpless, M.D., said, "critical questions remain about the safety" of the products, *CNN* reported. "While we have seen an explosion of interest in products containing CBD, there is still much that we don't know," Sharpless added.

CBD products have swamped the market not because of any new medical evidence, but because of a change in federal law. Late last year, Congress passed a farm bill that lifted a decades-old ban on growing hemp. As long as the plant contains less than 0.3 percent tetrahydrocannabinol, hemp can be grown legally anywhere in the United States by licensed farmers. The bill specifically said the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration cannot regulate hemp products like CBD. So, it is now up to the FDA to manage the CBD craze. The agency has sent warning letters to companies marketing CBD products, telling them to stop making unfounded health claims for the substance. Companies have falsely claimed that CBD can stop cancer cells, slow the progression of Alzheimer disease, ease nerve pain and fibromyalgia, and curb withdrawal symptoms for people undergoing substance abuse treatment, the FDA letters state.

To date, there is only one use for CBD that has significant scientific evidence behind it—curbing the symptoms of rare forms of epilepsy. The FDA last year approved the drug Epidiolex to treat Dravet syndrome and Lennox-Gastaut syndrome. The medical evidence has shown that the highly purified CBD in Epidiolex can ease seizures. For the rest of CBD's potential uses, there is too little evidence to make a firm conclusion.

More information: *CNN* Article